

Cross or Crescent for Constantinople? Old Struggle of East and West on Again



By F. P. Wilson

FOR the first time since the year 1458 the city of Constantinople, with her Golden Horn for harbor and her romantic monuments, is once more in the hands of Christendom.

At Yildiz Kiosk some kind of a sultan sits solitary, but his absolute power has vanished forever. Based upon force, the faith of Islam has failed in politics and only survives as religious worship. Baghdad, Mecca, Jerusalem, Delhi, Algiers—all the great towns of Mahometanism are ruled, directly or indirectly, by Christian nations. Under France and Britain there are more Moslems, by many times, than ever followed the Prophet and his immediate successors.

And as the political power of Islam wanes, so do her numbers, especially in Africa, increase.

A Romance of History

What an amazing story has been this—of Constantinople or Byzantium! To the ancient Greeks the shores of the Black Sea were what America was to Columbus. Thither sailed Jason and his Argonauts to seek the Golden Fleece. To prevent the rocks of the Dardanelles closing on their little boat and dashing it to pieces they sent a dove in advance, while Orpheus, the musician, played on his lute.

It was for the possession of By-

zantium and the Bosphorus—the gateway to the trade of what we call the Russian Ukraine—that Athens and Sparta went to war. The crescent on the Turkish flag is not of Moslem origin. Mahomet never authorized it. It came from Egypt to Greece and from Greece to Byzantium, where the Turks discovered it and made it their own.

The control of the Dardanelles was the underlying reason for the siege of Troy, lasting ten years and immortalized by Homer. An obstruction to the arms of Greece was swept away when Hector fell victim to the arms of Achilles. To this day, of the million persons who live in Constantinople one-third are Greeks and only one-half are classed as Turks.

Xerxes—possibly the Ahasuerus who deposed Queen Vashti and fell in love with Esther, the Jewish maiden—swept with his hordes of Persians across the Hellespont, west of Byzantium, but was checked at Thermopylae by the heroic Leonidas, and retreated in rage and ruin, leaving behind him untouched the queenly city. In his famous march of the Ten Thousand, Xenophon, too, visited Byzantium, which was defended by the Greeks against Philip of Macedonia, but when the encouraging eloquence of Demosthenes was silent, fell to the conquering might of Alexander the Great—then bound for the Indus.

Under the Romans the city de-

THE Mosque of St. Sophia in Constantinople

clined. Such a glory Greece must have regarded as a rival. Severus, the Emperor, had actually destroyed it. But in the year 329 of our era Constantine the Great began to rebuild the place on a scale of unexampled splendor. Constantinople was to be Rome what Petrograd was for Moscow and Calcutta for Delhi.

When Rome Divided?

The Empire of the Caesars split into east and west, and Constantinople became an independent capital, superseding Athens—she was the bulwark of our civilization against Asia.

Great councils of the Church were held there. Terrible controversies rent the people into warring parties—Arians, Monophysites, Orthodox. Those were days when Athanasius of Alexandria thundered forth his creed and when the Iconoclasts raged in the churches, destroying images as ruthlessly as did the Cromwells. Amid the fury of persecution, love and passion entered into the drama. An Emperor like Justinian, austere and ambitious, was smitten with the charms of Theodora, actress, dancer and courtesan—who became first his mistress, then his

throne in Adrianople, the chief town of Thrace.

Constantinople had thus ample warning. But her statesmen were engrossed in splitting theological hairs over abstruse doctrines. A blind Europe, too, was hopelessly divided. The Crusaders—prejudiced against the Eastern Church—had visited Constantinople and mistreated her. The Venetians did not seriously assist her. With only 7,000 defenders the city fell; the Emperor was slain; the cross was torn down from the Cathedral of St. Sophia; the mosaics were mutilated or covered; the altars were desecrated, and this most famous Christian church at that date became a mosque.

For Four Centuries

Then Europe realized her mistake. The historic isles of Greece—Athens—all the provinces lying at the mouth of the Danube became Turkish, and even Vienna was be-

sieged. For five and one-half centuries the long agony has been endured. But in the last 100 years, slowly and surely, the Turk has been driven back. First, Greece was liberated, then Serbia, then Bulgaria. Now it is the turn of Thrace, and, in effect, Constantinople is released.

Incidentally, the dream of the Kaiser has been shattered. In that dream there was nothing so improbable as we sometimes think. Islam has always employed the most powerful political weapon available. If her capital had moved from Mecca and Baghdad to Constantinople, why should it not move further west to Berlin? If caliphs had been succeeded by sultans why should not sultans be succeeded by kaisers? If the sword had passed from Arab or Saracen to Turk, why should it not be handed on to Prussian? It would be kismet. It would be fate.

feated Christians. Death and slavery were inflicted on them. The treasures of the city were scattered abroad; yet, while the Moslems had used the manuscripts in the incomparable library of Alexandria to heat their baths, some books from Constantinople reached Italy, and with the help of refugee scholars inspired the renaissance or revival of learning throughout Europe.

Two great questions now remain. Turkish debts always have been poor assets, and France and Britain cannot hope to recover much of the money which, as the late Lord Salisbury expressed it, they "put on the wrong horse." The debts were secured on the whole Ottoman Empire, of which nothing remains. Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Thrace and Armenia are all alienated; and Constantinople—rather like Vienna—is a head without a body.

So much for finance. The second question is sentimental. If the fall of Constantinople was provocative and cruel, every effort has been made in the recovery of the city to spare the feelings of Moslems throughout the world. Over unrest in India and Egypt Britain is, in particular, very nervous. But the Turk has up to the last proved himself incorrigible, and his latest massacres in Armenia, including as they did the destruction of American missions at Marash, have ended the debate. The only question that remains is as to the future of the ancient basilica of St. Sophia—now a mosque.

Christians Have Best Claim

Built by Christians—the very model of Byzantine architecture—it belongs by ancient origin to Christians. No one can dispute that title deed. But this is not quite the whole story. The ancient cathedrals of Ireland were built by Catholics, but are held by Protestants, as also

be claimed historically by the Jews. It was where they built three successive temples. It was by tradition the Mount Moriah, on the bare rocky summit of which Abraham would have slain Isaac.

In all these cases what we have to decide is whether bricks and mortar, however sacred and interesting, are worth the further sacrifice of flesh and blood. For five and one-half centuries St. Sofia has been, in actual fact, a mosque. The average Moslem has never thought of it otherwise. I suppose that, strictly speaking, St. Peter's at Rome, like all our Western churches, was designed, unconsciously it may be, on the plan of a Roman basilica or court of justice. Where Pontius Pilate sat when he judged the Saviour corresponds with the altar where the Saviour is worshipped. Some churches were actually pagan temples, but we do not suggest that they should be restored to paganism because they were built for paganism.

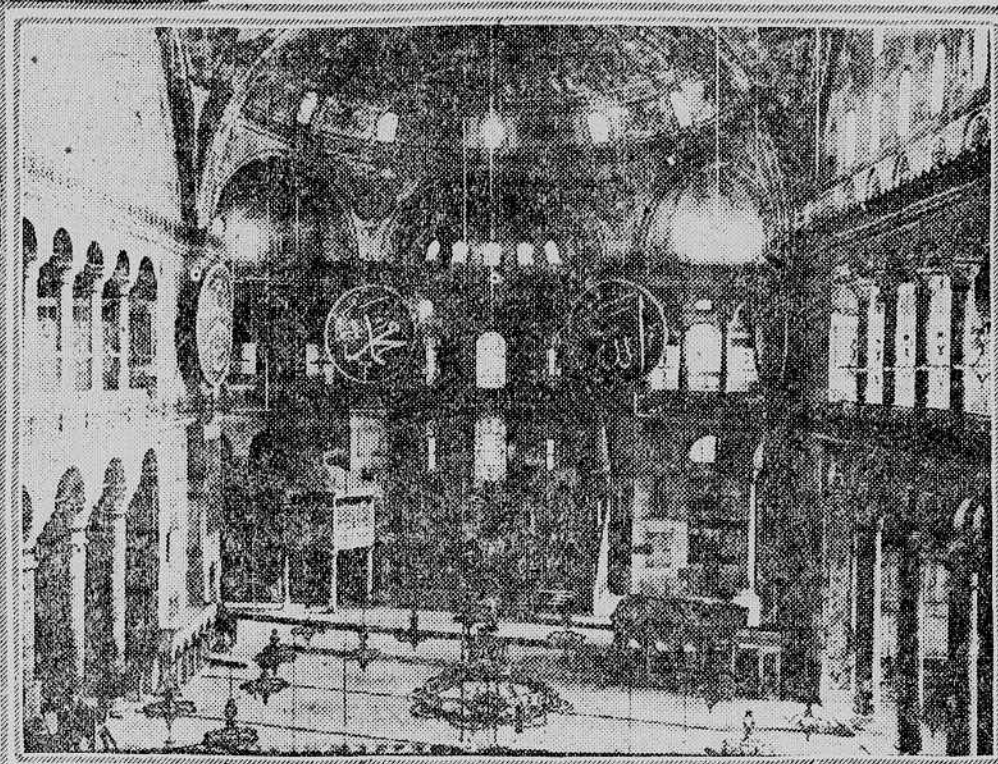
The plan of St. Sofia has been applied to mosques all over the world. They are octagonal in design because St. Sofia is, broadly, eight-sided. In the Taj Mahal, that most lovely of all Indian tombs, as in innumerable other examples of Moslem architecture, you see a free adaptation of the old Byzantine style. In a sense, therefore, the Christian builder has conquered the Moslem mind, as the Christian statesman has directed the Moslem government. Therefore, it is argued, if we seize St. Sofia we do in fact deprive Moslem art of a parent.

To Which Church?

On the other hand, the Islamic possession of this stolen church has been, to Greek and Armenian Christians, a sore grievance. They remind us how little consideration has been shown by Turks for Christian shrines—for Christian bishops and priests and nuns—and they ask whether there can be any real peace until justice is done. If we admit this plea, then we must decide to what branch of the Christian faith St. Sofia should be restored. For Protestant worship the edifice is quite unsuited and, of course, it never was used specifically for the distinctive Roman Catholic rite, except in so far as this was the heritage of the Eastern churches. Hence the strong claims advanced by the Greek and the Roman communions.

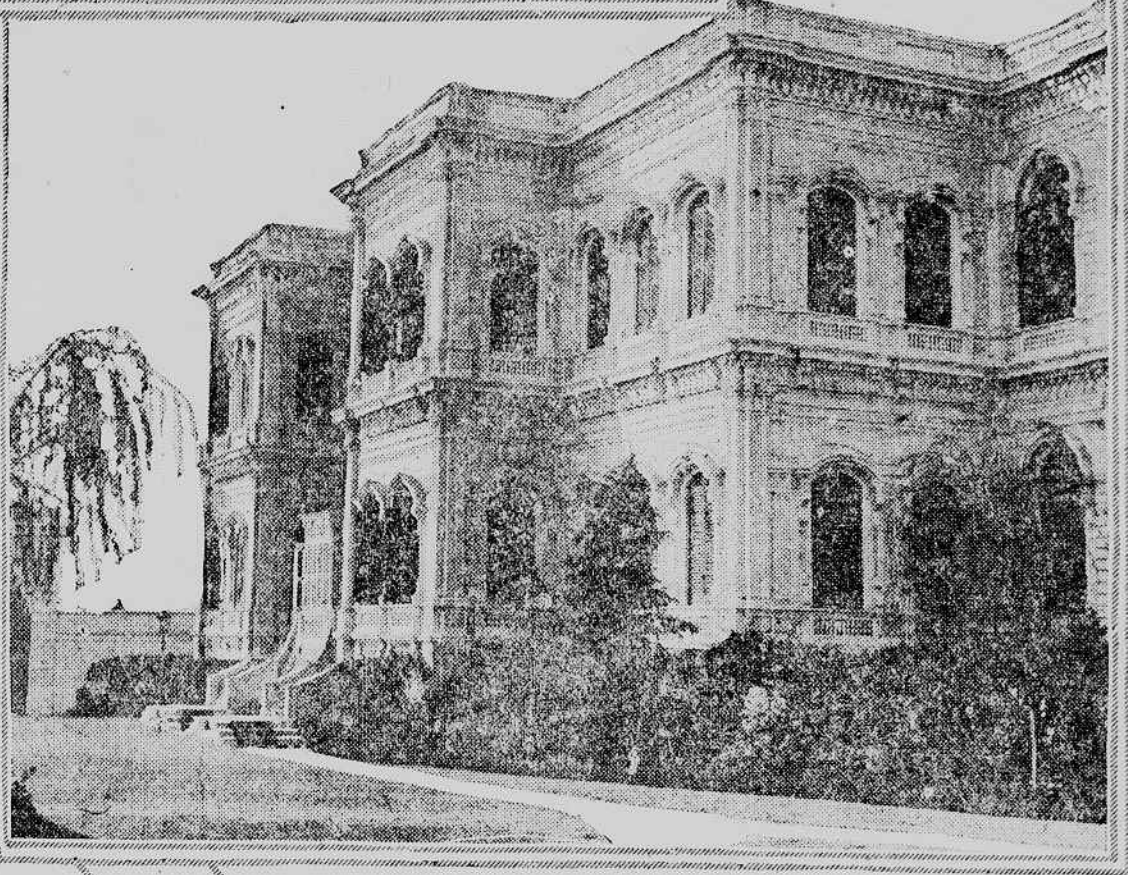
In weighing up this matter one cannot ignore the passionate yearning of Eastern Christians, after a thousand years of intolerable ill usage and persecution, to hear once more their mass sung in the very building where mass was sung for the last time when Constantinople fell.

Indian Moslems have little sympathy with the crimes committed up to this hour by their brutalized Turkish comrades. The chivalry of Seladin, which Sir Walter Scott describes in "The Talisman," has been dragged in the mud by the Ottomans. And—while it is too much to hope with any confidence—the least reparation that these guilty murderers can make to the Christians whom they have robbed and outraged would be to surrender voluntarily the metropolitan cathedral of the Eastern churches to the guardians who undoubtedly have an indefensible moral right to its possession.



INTERIOR of the Mosque of St. Sophia, in Constantinople

empress-consort, and, as history makes plain, his wise counselor. Luxurious, immoral, disputatious Constantinople had reason to tremble as the Moslems swept nearer and nearer to her walls. The first Saracen aggression, which flooded Spain and reached France, did not threaten Constantinople. It was when the Turks became the ruling and conquering Moslem race that disaster came. It was not, however, at this city that the Turks first obtained their foothold in Europe. A hundred years before Constantinople fell the sultans were en-



THE HOME of the Sultan of Turkey, at Constantinople

Happily, the dream is now only a nightmare.

Christians Humiliated

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 was accomplished with the maximum of humiliation for the de-

was Westminster Abbey; while the temple area at Jerusalem, on which stands the mosque of Omar, could

A Thunderstorm in the Making

HAVE you ever been up in the air to watch a thunderstorm grow? If you were merely on the ground looking up, then you saw only the bottom of it. The airman is the one who sees just what is happening in a thunderstorm, and the birth and growth of a regular summer joy killer.

A few hours before the sky was, perhaps, perfectly clear. All at once a few white patches become visible to the eye, and if they quickly begin to dot the whole sky it is a warning sign. Each fluffy cloud represents the point where moisture rising from the earth has begun to condense. The rapid formation of the clouds means uneven heating of the surface of the earth and the presence of lots of moisture in the air. . . . The clouds grow together, forming a continuous rolling mass of dense vapor, cutting off the flyer's view of the earth.

So far the storm has been only threatening. The clouds have spread sideways as far as they can; now they begin to grow heavier. The heated air from the earth below pushes through the heavy layer and bulges it upward. Higher and higher it is pushed, while more and more moisture condenses, and this great bulging mass of vapor, sometimes three or four miles high, has become a thundercloud. Its bulging

tops are called thunder peaks or thunder heads, and they are responsible for the lightning, the heaviness of rainfall and the hail we sometimes have in midsummer. The energy of a thunderstorm is amazing, says a writer in "Popular Mechanics." A single great cloud may contain billions of pounds of water vapor. The flashes of lightning from cloud to cloud are sometimes twenty miles in length, and when we stop to think that it takes a current of 15,000 volts pressure to produce a spark an inch long, we can only wonder at the approximate amount of electricity involved in a single flash.

Sometimes the wind of a thundercloud or the "squall," as it is called, is violent enough to level trees, and is improperly called a tornado. There is a big difference. A tornado is a violent whirlpool of air that sweeps across the country and twists off trees and roofs in its path. The wind from a thunderstorm blows straight away from the storm and never twists. The tornado is always dangerous, while the wind from a thunderstorm is only occasionally dangerous.

Broadly speaking, there are three general stages in the development of a thunderstorm. There must be strong currents of moist air rising from the earth, as indicated by the appearance of the white patches of cloud. This condition must continue until the sky is covered. And lastly, the force of these upward currents must be great enough to push the clouds up into thunder heads. A thunderstorm then results.



A TURKISH beauty in the costume of the native women

and profession is represented in the questionnaires signed by them. Besides school teachers, artists, stenographers, students, professors, lawyers, electricians, and other indoor workers, the list includes the garment workers, who have several months' idle time; the hat trade, which has three months' slack between the straw and felt hat season; the wall paper industry, which is only active six months in the year; the millinery trade, which is dormant between seasons, and the special seasons' workers like those

in the Christmas and Easter novelty trades.

By taking up the slack time of these workers, the organization is making every effort to revive those industrial habits formed during the critical years of 1917 and 1918, when thousands of patriotic men and women became farm helpers and farmerettes, cheerfully working for the farmers, who had been deprived of their hands by the call of war, or had lost their "hired men" through the superior wages and more attractive living conditions offered by the great industrial centers.

Vacation Jobs for the Farm

WHEN the warm spring days begin to arrive and the city worker begins to look longingly at the calendar and perform mental calculations, it is a sure sign that some millions of vacation ideas in New York and vicinity are coming to the surface after long months of submersion under the sterner realities of life.

These plans are dusted off and generally given the good old "once over," and then enter those wet blankets of most any pleasure planning—the "economic considerations." The introduction of dollars and cents into such a subject is liable to take the joy out of life, as most of those having to do any close figuring know to their sorrow.

And this summer these same disagreeable economic considerations are more than likely to give pause even to those luckier ones to whom financial considerations are not such a vital matter. The price

of that vacation room and board rose to a new high point last year, but this summer's vacation bill is due to go still higher.

A Vacation With Pay

Hence the matter of paying for a vacation may amount to a rather serious problem for 1920. Well, then, as the American Land Service suggests: How about substituting for it a "vacation with pay"? Thus, take the case of Gertrude, one of a vast number of her kind.

This rather pale young lady is employed in an office in the East Forties. On one of the spring days so productive of vacation thought she hurried back to work from a hasty luncheon, her brow corrugated as she wondered how and where she was going to spend her two weeks, which she would have to take early this summer for business reasons.

At this perplexing point she happened to meet a friend she had not seen all winter, and the friend, not-

ing Gertrude's perturbation, asked her the reason for her frown.

Then Gertrude confided her vacation problem to her friend, saying that she was strong enough to work but certainly needed a change, as she had not felt just right ever since she had had the "flu."

"You come along with me!" commanded the friend. "I know just the thing for you this summer. I just signed up there myself," and without stopping to explain she hurried Gertrude over to the Lexington Theater, where a few minutes later Gertrude had registered as a farmerette in the American Land Service for three weeks. And that is why she is looking happily forward with hundreds of others to this coming vacation—"with pay."

Helps Farmer, Too

The third great problem she and the multitude of her fellow men and women farm helpers and farmerettes will help to solve is the dilemma in which the American farmer finds himself at the threshold of his harvest season. The farmers of this country are facing the most acute shortage of farm labor since the war, and every man or woman who can help them gather this summer's harvest will at the same time be performing a real economic service to the country. For the American Land Service believes that if the present underproduction of farm products can be started toward its old normal volume the abnormally high food costs can be correspondingly reduced.

This idea of farm volunteer recruiting is expanded to even a greater extent, in the enlistment of that vast multitude of city seasonal workers who have many weeks of idle time on their hands. The American Land Service, in the first month of its enlistment campaign, enrolled nearly 4,000 city men and women at its headquarters in the Lexington Theater, 571 Lexington Avenue. A large proportion of these recruits are city seasonal workers, anxious to keep occupied for health, profit, or for both reasons.

Nearly every trade, occupation



ONE KIND of work that city girls find pleasant on the farm